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Women are Better Cooks

Each morning, I unwillingly arise from bed and proceed to get ready for the day ahead, as does the rest of my family. Ironically, when my brother, my dad, and I get home after school and work, my mother is not the one who generally puts together our family dinners, unless it comes from a box requiring only the microwave for cooking. My father decided to take over the cuisine in our family when one particular food preparation incident, which included an awful burning odor, plenty of smoke, and a chicken flying across the kitchen, resulted in yet another “wonderful” home cooked meal from mom. My dad now takes pleasure in preparing meals for the family, and he even is pondering the idea of becoming a chef in his later years. Furthermore, this concept of terrible cooking carries over into the holidays during family gatherings; instead of cooking, my mother is more often than not the dishwasher, and life is better this way. In my particular family, the man happens to be the better and more successful cook than the woman. In addition, I work at Land & shore restaurant every Tuesday as a dishwasher. The chef I work with is male, and the other chefs that work at this restaurant are male as well.

According to the Economic and Social Development Department, “gender rolesare the ‘social definition’ of women and men. They vary among different societies and cultures, classes, ages and during different periods in history. Gender-specific roles and responsibilities are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions” (What is Gender?). Throughout the history of America, society as a whole has created stereotypes and gender roles that have a huge impact on the people around the world. One particular example of these ‘roles’ is that women have always been better cooks than men. How was this established and is the myth true?

Women placed in the gender roll of housekeeping and cleaning has drastically changed in today’s world, but this was not the case throughout the early years of the American society. The role of women throughout the early 19th century included getting married, having children, cleaning the home, and cooking meals for their husbands (D, Linda). Sitcoms and movies throughout most of the 80’s typically portray women in the perspective of cooking. For example, The Brady Bunch was your average American family, with Alice as their house cleaner, who did all the cooking (List of The Brady Bunch characters). This *myth*, that women are better cooks then men, originates from the early American lifestyle of families: The husband goes to work each day while the wife remains at home and cares for their children, cleans the home, and cooks the meals.

The recognition of women as better cooks could possibly be false, considering its origination in the early 19th century households. According to Chef2Chef.net, currently in 2009, seventy-three out of the top one-hundred chefs are male. Although the number one chef happens to be female, seventy-three percent of American’s top one-hundred chefs are male (100 Top Chefs). The truth might even be that women cannot cook. The reason that so many women are unable to produce excellent quality meals is because they are cooking with speed, and performing this action as a necessity rather than a luxury pastime. Women also are less likely to experiment and try new idea when cooking (Why Women Can't Cook). Outside the home, males are commonly the chefs seen in five star restaurants, featured on television, and used in advertisements. Rarely do viewers see a female chef in a commercial advertising for an Olive Garden or Outback Steakhouse restaurant.

The traditional roles of women in the home gave birth to a stereotype that women are better cooks in today’s culture. Throughout America today, high-class restaurants, cruise ships, and even television shows such as food network have head chefs who are males. Although not a high-class restaurant illustration, Spongebob Squarepants is a cartoon that depicts the restaurants throughout America. The main character, Spongebob, is a fry cook at the Crusty Crab. This particular stereotype of women looks solely at the role of women in the household, where men generally do not cook. Looking at an overall representation of cooks in America, far more of them are men. The fact that there are more male chefs in the workplace and publicized does not mean that men are better cooks than women are; it simply discredits the stereotype of women being better cooks than men. Although society puts women in the gender role of preparing the best quality of food, gender mostly likely does not affect whether the male or female is better in the culinary arts. The real answer to the question of whether or not women are better cooks than men is perhaps unanswerable, because this stereotype depicts women in the household where men normally do not cook, and top notch, excellent quality meals are generally not prepared.

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